THE MESSIAHSHIP OF SHAKSPEARE

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The Messiahship of Shakspeare

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The Messiahship of Shakspeare

Sung and Expounded

by

CLELIA (Charles Downing)

Author of
'God in Shakspeare,' 'Great Pan Lives,' Etc.

'Paullo majora canamus.'
Virgil—4th Eclogue.

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

A FIT CRITIC,

WHOM I ESTEEM TO BE,

NOT

AN ANTIQUARIAN AND PHILOLOGIST

(WITH WHOM I AM NOT ON COMMON GROUND),

BUT ONE

VERSED IN THE LITERATURE OF THE LAST CENTURY,

OF WHICH THE SPIRIT

IS SUMMED UP

IN THE SPIRIT OF SHAKSPEARE.

98204

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PREFACE

It has been my experience, repeatedly, to find that those who receive my account of the Life, Personality and Religion of Shakspeare as reasonable in itself, and as what they would only expect of so great a poet, are, in religion, disciples of the late Professor Seeley. This points immediately to the class of ideas in which I work on this great subject—ideas, however, that I derived from general literature and first found systematised for me by Shakspeare. I now find them systematised very similarly in 'Ecce Homo' and 'Natural Religion,' the main, perhaps only, distinction being that Shakspeare creates artistically the religion

that the Professor sketches speculatively.

Shakspeare has been regarded from many points of view, with results more and more negative of personality, more and more reducing him to a mere mirror of the universe. But he has never been regarded, until lately, from the modern English religious point of view, one illuminated, say, by the writings of Goethe, Carlyle, Emerson, Renan, Matthew Arnold, Seeley. To be called upon to regard Shakspeare from a religious point of view is naturally most uncongenial to the purely literary or the purely philosophic mind. Nevertheless, it is the point of view most fruitful of results.

I see no sign that the most enlightened religious views of the present were any secret to Shakspeare. It may be thought that as such a vast work of criticism has been necessary,

in order to bring the world, in our times, to these enlightened views, Shakspeare could not possibly have possessed them in his pre-critical era. But Spinoza, the father of Biblical criticism, in the middle of the seventeenth century, in his famous 'Tractate,' is absolutely coeval with the last critical word of our times, and that by direct perception, upon mere inspection of the Biblical text. The vast work of criticism since has been a siege in form of the human mind, which is surrounded by walls of superstition, interest, prejudice and stupidity, that resist all but an accumulation of overwhelming force. Is it necessary to say that no such walls engirt Shakspeare's mind, that he would capitulate to Truth at sight, and that in gifts of direct perception he was, at least, not surpassed by Spinoza?

This position of supreme enlighten-

ment, amid the wars, murders, massacres, mutual persecutions, barbarous controversies and jargonings that then devastated the world, in name of a generally misunderstood religion, must have been very moving to the heart of Shakspeare; since it was hopeless for him to attempt to breathe one syllable of the wisdom that would have redeemed the world from its madness and unhappiness. It cannot be supposed that he had no care for the world's happiness. That one of his characters, whom all critics identify with him, Prospero, bears a name that, being interpreted by the Latin dictionary, means 'I make happy.'

But the help he could not render in his lifetime he might render in the remote future. Then Christianity would be understood, and the question would be, 'What next?' To this question, upon a common basis of

understanding as to the past, he might supply the answer.

It is my conclusion that the knowledge of Shakspeare's Life and Personality is inseparably bound up with a knowledge of his religious ideas, of which he has never directly spoken, but which he has nevertheless artistically enshrined in his writings, to be duly inferred by criticism in the fulness of time. And if, until lately, we have been unable to see the poet's Life and Personality, it was because we were unable to see his religious ideas. And these we could not see because we had them not, the light was not in us. But now that our own eyes are opened to the spiritual light, we may see the spiritual light that Shakspeare saw, and with it his Life and Personality.

To develop and reconstruct Christianity in the light of the Reformation and Renaissance, this, about the year

1598, I infer from all the evidence, became the great purpose and life-work of Shakspeare; to be achieved, first, by living the developed life himself, for our example; secondly, by certain symbolical works, namely *The Sonnets*, already largely composed and ready to his shaping hand, and those which subsequently took form as *The Tempest*, *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*. These were to veil, till the fulness of time, his pregnant ideas of the Development and Reconstruction, together with himself as the necessary central figure and Messianic Personality of the scheme.

In Shakspeare's imagination the two great movements of the Renaissance and the Reformation were, in a spiritual sense, respectively, the Rebirth of Pan or the Universal Spirit, and the Second Coming of Christ or the Moral Spirit. But where were the Persons of Pan and Christ? He con-

ceived them united and reconciled in his own person. Accordingly he presents himself as Pan in *The Sonnets*, and as Christ in *The Tempest*. It is not, as far as I can discern, upon the suggestion of any supernatural or mystical hypothesis that he assumes these characters; he assumes them as an artist, agreeably to his art, as I shall explain in detail. Thus we may say of him, as Herrick, in his 'Rex Tragicus' says of Christ:—

> 'We (Thy lovers) see Thee keep
> The Laws of Action.'

Marlowe boasted that he could invent a better religion than Christianity. It is not so wonderful then that Marlowe's greater contemporary should undertake the lesser task of developing and reconstructing Christianity.

I am in this peculiar position as an author, that I offer evidence of what were Shakspeare's views of himself,

and I find repeatedly that, by my critics, these views are supposed to be my original views of Shakspeare. Nothing of the kind! They had never occurred to me till I had arrived at them inductively from Shakspeare's text. From this it follows that my critics should meet me, in the first place, upon the ground of the evidence. So far as they cannot dispute the legitimacy of my conclusions from the evidence, then, as to the 'views,' if they still dispute them, they are face to face, not with me, but with Shakspeare. But a critic's present object obviously should be to verify these views as the poet's own. To dispute them would be a subsequent task, and a somewhat vain and difficult one, owing to their intangible, poetical nature. Hardly any other course is open but to adopt them, as I do.

I fear I cannot promise merely an

entertaining essay that needs no study. The solution of the problem of the Life and Personality of Shakspeare has been arduous work for the writer, and must necessarily cost the reader some pains to master and to be satisfied of its validity. We owe Shakspeare a debt; let us repay it by troubling ourselves to learn what he valued above all our empty praises, his enshrined thought to help the world in its spiritual difficulties; and so grant him, at last, just the one priceless recognition that has been denied him.

As in this work I have constantly to interpret the symbolism of Shakspeare, and attempts to interpret symbolism have become notorious for their insufficiency, I may remark that the principles of symbolism are easy of discovery, and are expounded in my writings; and having been governed by these principles, I may be excused for feeling,

upon this ground alone, some surety as to the correctness of my interpretations. But the complete certainty that I enjoy upon this point is based upon the consistency of my interpretations. To interpret consistently every word of *The Tempest*, as I have done in 'God in Shakspeare,' and every word of *Sonnets* 20-126, as I have done in 'Great Pan Lives,' implies that *The Tempest* and *The Sonnets*, 20-126, bear necessarily the symbolical meanings that I have assigned to them. It implies further that Shakspeare was conscious of those very meanings. For while a single sonnet or a single scene of the play might easily be interpreted in a sense of which Shakspeare never thought, it would be to outrage the theory of probabilities to suppose that a long series of sonnets, or a five-act play, could be interpreted consistently to bear a connected symbolical meaning,

unless the poet was guided by a full consciousness of this symbolical meaning. In his sleep a man may walk a mile, but cannot walk round the world.

The two symbolical poems may serve to show that my study of symbolism has advanced to the intimacy of practice; and if they really contain a little poetry, this should add, at least, as much to my authority as a critic of Shakspeare as if I could display a little philology. The longer poem sums up symbolically the life-work and teaching of Shakspeare. Its interpretation, therefore, is to be found in the prose parts of the book.

As my writings have accidentally some sensational aspects, my pseudonym was adopted to save me from the imputation of seeking the bubble reputation by these sensational accidents, and generally because I had no personal objects to serve, but put Truth and

Shakspeare first. A pseudonym, however, is inconvenient in practice, at least, to a teacher of new ideas, who needs to answer for them with his person. In the present volume, therefore, I append to my pseudonym my name in brackets.

CLELIA
(CHARLES DOWNING).

The Messiahship of Shakspeare

A SYMBOLIC POEM

Personae:—The Messiah.
Two Beggar-maids.
Time, A.D. 1598.

The tears of night are shed,
Day glances o'er the dew;
I mount,—the shaft is sped,—
Now quick, to horse, pursue!

The ancient reign has ceased!
Behold my flag unfurled!
I ride forth from the East
To wander through the world.

I seek, till being fades,—
  Oh, watch the moving scene!—
The long-lost orphan maids,
  Twin daughters of a queen.

What time that I lay pent
  In gloom, to moan and sigh,
The darkling veil was rent,
  I saw them passing by:

As changelings in the land,
  Adown the busy street,
Clasped tender hand in hand,
  They sang in concord sweet,

Their kirtles to the knee,
  Their feet, unsandalled, bare;
None guessed their royalty,
  What mighty race was there!

Gifted by Nature kind
With generous overflow,
Their locks streamed to the wind,
They bounded as the roe.

Alike their tresses' hue,
Their stature, form and grace;
Unlike their souls shone through
The clear and pure, fair face.

One had that eye so wild,
Flashing with sunlight flows;
All graciously she smiled,
And blushing like the rose.

And rapt in hallowed trance,
Coy and pale glowing, one
A lily bloomed; her glance
Starrily gleaming shone.

Lo! took they beggars' fees
In kindred garb of shame:
I rose upon my knees,
In dread I breathed their name.

From maiden breast to breast
Flew, trilling to the word,
Flutt'ring to be caressed,
A blithesome, blood-red bird.

The Rose her kisses spent
In balm, and soothed its fears;
The Lily o'er it bent,
And bathed it with her tears.

Then like a crimson dart,
Through bars so thick and strong,
It flew unto my heart,
And chanted all day long:

Or if it flitted round
  My prison dark like flame,
Back to the nest, at sound
  Of voice, it wilder came :

From Time's long smould'ring ash
  It seemed to rise and sing,
And all the world with clash
  Of maiden swords did ring ;

The old allegiance broke,
  A novel homage calls,
The peals of Death awoke,
  And burst my dungeon walls.

I spring up with the light,
  I mount upon the morn,
And from my warders' sight
  I, quick as thought, am borne.

At once my gentle guest,
  Its impress left instead,
Forth breaking from my breast,
  Hovers above my head :

Until, transformed, on strong
  Wings of the eagle, home
It soars with spheral song
  Through heaven's azure dome.

Now, for that gift so meet,
  My soul with life did fill,
Gave freedom to my feet,
  A courser to my will,

Who kisses did bestow
  In all men's view shall ride
With princes at her bow,
  And sages by her side :

Gleaming in glory, far
Shall splendid cavalcades
Of knights renowned in war
And snowy-vestured maids

Follow, through Ocean's voice
And restless seas of heads,
O'er-showered with all the joys
The sun of summer sheds,

Unto a city strong
With battlements and towers
And gates, whence children throng
To strew the approach with flowers.

And there a throne of gold
High over earth is set.
Ascend, swift, joyous, bold,
Merrily laughing yet!

In robe of purple stain,
With crownèd locks impearled,
A beauteous sovereign reign
And Queen of all the World!

But yet, oh, humbly kneel,
And all that on thee tend!
Ye ranks, wide, reverent, feel
The approaching sign and bend!

Midst of the royal space
The twin-born sister stands,
With heaven-directed face
And high-uplifted hands;

While from the welkin speeds
A car, from Iris kind;
All close it comes, its steeds
Proud prancing on the wind:

From the wain's quivering woofs
  Wild melodies resound,
From the quick flashing hoofs
  Resurging thunders bound.

On liberated wings
  The Vot'ress soars in air;
Aloft to alight she springs;
  And snowy, glistening, bare,

Curbs—Queen of Heav'n—her car:
  Quick on her brow appears
Gold from a Dawn afar,
  The crown of all her tears.

Ah, worn with wounds and heat,
  And faint with toil, I sigh;
Gazing on life complete,
  Behold, I fall to die.

But thou, World-Victress, rise,
  Reward me from thy throne!
Rain Grace to the world's eyes,
  As once to mine alone!

'Tis well! oh, Goddess bright,
  Stay but to take my soul;
Then like a beam of light
  Flashing from pole to pole,

Turn with a thought and urge
  Thy glowing car from men,
To where beyond the verge
  Of utmost mortal ken

A cloud reposes; bait
  There thine o'er-breathèd team,
Press close thy death-born freight,
  And hide earth's farewell gleam;

Then thine own plumes dispread,
  And through the starry way,
Fly to my fountain head
  In everlasting day!

. . . . . .

The tears of night are shed,
  Day glances o'er the dew;
I mount,—the shaft is sped,—
  Now quick, to horse, pursue!

The Symbolism and Religion of *The Sonnets* and *The Tempest*; and how to know the Personality of Shakspeare as of the Messianic type.

(*Read before the Society of 'The Three Kings,' June* 1900.)

I

Of recent years there has been in literature a great turning of the spirit to symbolism and to what may be called essential religion. Maeterlinck abroad and Mr Yeats at home are the names most prominent to me, at this moment, in the movement, but it pervades literature, and the latest minor poet will show traces of its influence. What, at last, has visited our own minds, we can now better conceive to have visited the minds of men of a previous age. And one may

dare, at last, to speak of the symbolism and religion of Shakspeare. Hitherto there has been scant recognition among the symbolists of their fraternity with Shakspeare. They are still under the spell of the purely scientific era from which we are emerging. Science has only been able to affirm itself by a war against religious symbols. In Shakspeare it has perceived the scientific mind and has tasted high joys of poetry without offence to its own spirit. Hence if one whispers, 'Shakspeare too is a symbolist, Shakspeare too is religious,' it cries, 'Avaunt! trouble not our peace!' The budding symbolist is awed by this cry, and concludes, with Zola, that Shakspeare may be left 'to his glory.' This is a great mistake. Shakspeare is symbolical in *The Sonnets*, and in his last three plays—*The Tempest*, *Winter's Tale* and

Cymbeline; and the thought that he enshrines in his symbols is religious thought, essentially modern, or even ahead of us by its breadth and constructiveness, qualities that give it great practical value. Here I may remark that when I first approached Shakspeare with critical intent, I was not a symbolist and not religious. I was a man of the scientific era, exasperated that the author I most loved was least humanly comprehensible to me. I cut him up in approved scientific fashion, analysed and compared his text, till gradually it dawned upon me, reluctant and protesting, that I was engaged in the scientific discovery of a new symbolism and a new religion.

By this discovery what has been called the enigma of Shakspeare's life and personality is also solved. For he is the central figure of his religion. He proves to be a man of Messianic type.

II

Shakspeare 'found religion' when first he found the Ideal, which, says Emerson, 'carries innumerable religions in its bosom.' In our days an admirable writer, Dr Crozier, has described how he left the backwoods of Canada and set sail for London in search of the Ideal, and how here he went through a course of voluminous reading, beginning with the philosophic and ending with the poetic thinkers, before he succeeded in his quest. Shakspeare found his Ideal much more simply by falling in love. It is clear from his early works that his imagination was very active in this passion, and endowed the object of his love with

infinite attributes, all beauty, all truth and all virtue. And when he discovered the object was only mortal and fallible and not the goddess of his dream, he was extremely surprised by this phenomenon of illusion, and thought it worthy of endless examination and illustration. And he became conscious that the idea of the perfect, however love might transfer it illusively to mortal forms, was but a tenant of his own mind. Thus he found the Ideal. Now when Shakspeare in the maturity of his intellect contracted his famous friendship with a beautiful youth and began to address him sonnets, the same spiritual phenomenon of idealisation of the object occurred, as before in his experience of love. But now he was completely awake to it, and was not content in the spontaneity of inspiration to be unconsciously addressing the Ideal in his friend. He took conscious

thought and deliberate care that his language throughout should be consistently and connectedly applicable to the Ideal, and allowed himself no personal allusion to his friend that should jar with his system of simultaneous metaphorical allusion to the Ideal. If this method of the poet is not perceived by many readers, it is because they have never conceived its existence, and have never studied *The Sonnets* connectedly with such a supposition in mind. In Shelley's *Epipsychidion* everyone perceives that the poet is addressing his Ideal in Emilia Viviani; there is very little concealment; the Ideal is seen emergent from the form of the woman, as if it were her soul escaping, or a butterfly nearly free from its chrysalis. But in Shakspeare's sonnets to his Ideal, the Ideal is almost entirely enclosed within the friend ostensibly addressed, and this

form has to become diaphanous to the Röntgen rays of literary insight before the Ideal can be seen.

When Shelley addresses Emilia thus :—

> 'Thou Mirror
> In whom, as in the splendour of the sun,
> All shapes look glorious that thou gazest on,

we perceive at once that he is addressing the Ideal, and referring to the idealistic vision that it causes in the mind, the 'splendid vision' of Wordsworth—

> 'The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream.'

But when Shakespeare gives to his friend

> 'An eye . . .
> Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth ;'

the language is so reticent, comparatively, that we miss at first the spiritual

meaning. We are content to suppose that the friend must have had an eye of exceptional brightness, possibly with the iris of a golden hue; there has even been research among Elizabethan portraits, with a view to discover someone with golden eyes, who might be identified with the friend. The meaning is, as in Shelley's more resplendent language, that idealistic vision glorifies its objects—

> 'Creating every bad a perfect best,
> As fast as objects to his beams assemble,'

as Shakspeare puts it again in the 114th Sonnet.

If anyone should know what the sonnets to the friend are about, it should be Shakspeare himself; and this is what he says on the subject, in the 105th Sonnet:—

> '"Fair, kind and true," is all my argument,
> "Fair, kind and true," varying to other words;

And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.'

'Fair, kind and true,' in one, or an Ideal of Beauty, Truth and Love in one, that, he says, is his whole argument. The description of the friend in the 20th Sonnet is only a translation of these terms into symbols. Thus for 'kind' is put the symbol, 'a woman's gentle heart'; for 'true' or eternally true perception, is put—

' An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth.'

And for 'fair' is put—

'A man in hue all hues in his controlling
That steals men's eyes or women's souls amazeth—'

an image of all-harmonious beauty, combining strength and grace. The poet turns abstract ideas into concrete images by the same artistic principle applied in poetry that the painter and the sculptor

would apply in their respective arts if they were asked to represent the Ideal, 'Fair, kind and true.'

If then *The Sonnets* are symbolical, what is the veiled thought they convey? This can be and has been demonstrated by a method that is cruel, like other methods of tuition, that of paraphrasing line by line, turning metaphors into ordinary prose, and substituting for 'Thou' or 'You' the Ideal, in the shape comtemplated by the poet at any moment. For, he says:—

'You in every blessed shape we know.'—*Sonnet* 53.

Here I must adopt a briefer method. Postponing reference to Sonnets 1-19, which, though placed first, were composed later, I begin with series 20-32. In this the poet is mainly occupied in stating the contract of his spirit to the Ideal, and in expressing his love for it, and the consolation he finds in it. In

series 33-42, taken with the series to the Dark Lady, begin developments. In the 38th Sonnet, the Ideal becomes the poet's Muse, because the contemplation of it inspires him. His pen cannot

'Want subject to invent
While thou dost *breathe*, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse. . . .
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine that rimers invocate!'

Henceforth he regards the Ideal more subjectively as an inspiring power, an operative grace within him, a Muse and more than a Muse. For in the next sonnet he says:—

'Thou art all the better part of me,'

that is, his spirit, as he tells us directly in the 74th Sonnet:—

'My spirit is thine, the better part of me.'

His spirit, that is, his soul, his higher and true self:—

'What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is't but mine own, when I praise thee?'
Sonnet 39.

'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise.'
Sonnet 62.

'My friend and I are one.'—*Sonnet* 42.

The friend having begun by representing the Ideal, now represents the poet's own soul as the Ideal in a subjective aspect.

At this point, a strange question, which has now passed beyond the range of controversy, and need not therefore long detain us, pressed upon Shakspeare. In the world before the flood of the Reformation, the Ideal was, in theory, an ascetic, a celibate Ideal that would not condescend to earthly passion.

'In the old age *black* was not counted *fair*,'

as the opening line of the 127th Sonnet symbolically states it. Was the old Ideal right, and if not, why not?

The poet treats the question symbolically. Himself, as representative of Man, stands between the Ideal or Soul, represented by the friend, on the one hand, and Passion, figured by a Dark Lady, on the other hand. It should be observed that there is one sonnet (146) addressed in direct terms to the soul, and another (129) in direct terms upon passion, as if on purpose to point us to the realities under the symbols. The poet shows us passion so influencing the soul that the soul goes over with all its idealism to passion, 'gilding' it as fair and good and true. So the man is left defenceless against passion. He reproaches the soul, and his internal conflict waxes desperate:—

'To win me soon to hell my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turned fiend,

Suspect I may yet not directly tell,
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell.
But this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.'

But at last the poet recognises that this blindness of the soul to what may be called the natural infirmities of passion is the law and will of Nature, in order that the soul may consent to join with passion in spiritualised love and its sequent effects in the perpetuation of life.

'Both for my sake lay on me this *cross*.'
Sonnet 42.

'Love's fire heats water[1] (or the Spirit), water cures not Love.' *Sonnet* 154.

And this is a beneficent dispensation to the Ideal, and leaves an ascetic or celibate ideal without valid spiritual excuse.

[1] 'Many waters cannot quench Love.'—*Song of Solomon*, viii. 7.

For want of a little comprehension of, and sympathy with, symbolism, Puritans have often shaken the head at the series of sonnets (33-5, 40-2, 127-154), which, nevertheless, contains only, against the celibate Ideal of the Middle Ages, an argument of which they would fully approve.

Series 43-56 treats mainly of a conflict in the poet's mind between the claims of business and the Ideal, his only joy.

In series 57-77, the Ideal, which had before become the poet's soul, now becomes the poet's genius, and a conflict arises between the claims of genius and soul, or of art and morality. It was at this time that Falstaff appeared on the stage, and one can well imagine serious people questioning the advantage to morality of this amusing exhibition of vice. Shakspeare therefore reproaches his genius and the Ideal for com-

promising him. Yet follow he must where it leads, his art must mirror the world, and therefore its vices as well as its virtues. In this series, also, the Ideal is addressed sometimes as in the world's mind, there manifesting itself as public taste.

In series 78-86 Shakspeare is in conflict with criticism. He addresses the Ideal very often as public taste and as the spirit of criticism, also as art, and even as a work of art, a 'blessed shape,' in which it may be manifest. He excuses himself for his want of learning and philosophy, but against the charge that he never writes about art, he affirms that he is writing about art now, but in proper artistic form, using a symbol for the abstract term, so preserving needful beauty in his verse; and that generally the love of art is best shown, not by talking about it, but by producing it.

In series 87-96 there is an eclipse of the Ideal. Business troubles, adverse criticism, and the scepticism engendered in the conflict between the claims of genius and art, on the one hand, and the claims of the soul and morality, on the other, darken for a time the light of the Ideal. The poet doubts if he truly possesses the Ideal, and confronted by a selfish and hostile world he doubts, especially, if Love be the true Ideal of conduct. Then follows a sad interim in the sonnet writing. In this sad interim it may be inferred from many sources that Shakspeare passed through the condition of disillusion, scepticism and irresolution, which he afterwards represented in *Hamlet*.

He has recovered in series 97-108, and the sun of the Ideal re-emerges. He again chants its praises and foresees his joint immortality with it in the works it inspires. At this time was written

also series 1-19, consisting, for the most part, of prayers to the Ideal, as his muse or genius, to inspire works of art, impressions of its beauty. Nature, he says,

'Carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby
Thou shouldst print more, nor let that copy die.'
Sonnet 11.

Of course, superficially, the poet appears to be merely entreating his friend to beget children; but this is a metaphor familiar to Shakspeare. In Richard II. he says:—

'My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,
My soul the father, and these two beget
A generation of still breeding thoughts.'

And in Sonnet 77 he calls the sonnets

'Those children nursed, delivered from thy[1] brain.'

In series 109-122 Shakspeare discusses his return to the Ideal in its third or

[1] Between 'my' and 'thy' there is no distinction left in the spiritual sense of the sonnets.

moral aspect. That for a period he has sacrificed morality in his art and life to the claims of beauty and truth he repents so far that he has resolved not to continue or repeat the sacrifice. He has suffered much by it; nevertheless, he will not admit for a moment but that for the limited period in question he was justified in making it. He points to the theatrical *rôle* assigned him by Destiny, in which he must mirror not only the world's virtues, but its vices, and therefore must be on speaking terms with those vices. He shows that the Ideal, by filling his mind to overflow, sheds for him a wave of illusion over the world, so that without trial it was impossible for him to distinguish always between good and evil; and therefore it was necessary for him to make 'worse essays' in order that he might be inspired, through experience, with a convinced apostolic

love of the one true way. Thus he was justified in his temporary divorce from morality upon a comprehensive view, or 'by all above'; by which he means by the interests of his life as a whole; that is, by his Ideal as a whole, above the suggestion of one part or aspect of it. 'By all above' seems, at first sight, a rather commonplace ejaculation jarring with the tone of *The Sonnets;* but it refers to expressions in the preceding (109th) sonnet, where Shakspeare protests he never intended

> 'To leave for nothing all thy sum of good.—
> For nothing this wide universe I call
> Save thou, my Rose; in it thou art my all.'

In Sonnet 112 he writes also, 'You are my all-the-world,' addressing the Ideal as the supreme reason of conduct, authoritative against all carping tongues. Here, then, the Ideal assumes a new identity as the All of Nature and

Supreme Reason of conduct, in a word, as God. And certainly if we may say God is Truth and God is Love, we may say also God is Beauty, and thereupon we may say God is Beauty, Truth and Love in one, or the threefold Ideal of Shakspeare. The dramatic poet, then, who by his art would reveal God, how should he reveal Him most? In each of his plays should the three aspects of God be revealed combined in one indistinguishable radiance? That were as imperfect a revelation as if light were revealed to us only in the composite beam. Speaking after the event, when Shakspeare's work is complete, we may note that in his work as a whole, and in a large proportion of the plays taken singly, he reveals in composition the three-fold radiance of God; yet there are some plays in which he allows beauty to shine most, others, in which, by way of compensa-

tion, he awards the predominance to the moral light, others again in which the light of truth is most in evidence. And this is well, for thus he reveals God more fully, not in the general alone, but also in the detail of His glory. This, perhaps, is the final solution of the delicate case of conscience between the claims of art and morality that arose in the poet's mind in the years when Falstaff held the stage.

In the final series, 123-126, Shakspeare proclaims his faith in truth, virtue and beauty, and in the life immortal (or so long as Nature subsists) of his soul in the Ideal.

In sum *The Sonnets* form a work essentially religious in its nature, if there are any marks by which to recognise religion. They are the first psalms of a new religion. In the old psalms, righteousness was all the Ideal, and God was a righteous God. In

the new the Ideal is a threefold one, of Beauty and Truth, with Love as Righteousness, or of Art, Science and Morality; and this Ideal is identified with God, and is the voice of God in the heart. The singer is as fervent as David in prayer and praise. He is as ardently desirous of obeying his Ideal, or the Voice of God in his heart, in its threefold obligation, as David his in its one obligation. He rejoices like David that his Ideal or God is with him, and will cause him to prevail over all his enemies. He despairs like David under the sense of unworthiness and of being abandoned. He has his penitential sonnets, as David his penitential psalms. He rejoices anew in reconciliation and pardon, and rests his eternal hope in his Ideal and his God. He is more symbolic than David, but so far, to my mind, he is only the more religious. Again, the Ideal of Shak-

speare is comparable to the Logos of Philo and as much entitled to the name. Philo cuts his Logos like a diamond into many facets: Shakspeare follows suit. According to Herriot in his work on Philo, Philo's Logos includes the Divine Power, as Shakspeare's Ideal includes God. Philo's Logos includes 'the Ideas,' as Shakspeare's Ideal includes Beauty, Truth and Love, and a multitude of subordinate ideas. Philo's Logos includes the Divine Spirit, as Shakspeare's Ideal includes the Muse. Philo's Logos includes the people of Israel as seer, as Shakspeare's Ideal includes the world as seer, in the idea Public Taste. Finally, Philo's Logos includes Man as a reasonable soul, as Shakspeare's Ideal includes his own soul, genius and true self.

As another mark of the religious nature of *The Sonnets*, they present in one symbol a Trinity in Unity of Shak-

speare, the Spirit of Beauty, Truth and Love, and God in one; as the Christian Trinity is Christ, the Spirit of Love, and God in one. This new Trinity in Unity, including with Shakspeare the All of Nature and the whole range of the Spirit, I call Shakspeare as Pan. In this climax ends the first half of Shakspeare's career.

III

In the second half of Shakspeare's career the idea of justice grew to possess his mind with overwhelming force, and it is a Logos of Justice that he finally symbolises in Prospero, in *The Tempest*. There are those who become impassioned for justice by studying works of ethics, jurisprudence, political economy and socialism. Shakspeare's passion had a more simple origin. The world seemed to combine to injure him, at a certain moment, and he did not like it. It was the moment when he was most idealistic, most under the sway of his Ideal, Beauty, Truth and Love, in his conduct therefore most loving and expansive to the world.

For a moment he was under the illusion that he had but to obey the law of Love to meet everywhere with reciprocity. But the selfish and false world thought, 'Lo, he is delivered into our hands, as a sheep to the slaughter!' and went for him with that cynically humorous enthusiasm which it evinces when it thinks it has found someone with a soft place. This experience and its consequences, presently to be mentioned, upon Shakspeare's mind may be inferred from voluminous evidence in his works. But here I must give the story without the evidence. Shakspeare passed into the Hamlet state. His basis of action was gone. He could neither live with the Ideal nor without it. It was then that he returned to the country, to Stratford, and set up his rest at New Place. At first he was intent upon absolute seclusion with his Ideal. But he soon perceived

that a cloistered virtue was no virtue. The Ideal would exist only if lived in the world. But how could it be lived in the world? Only by the aid of an active and energetic spirit of justice! He must be cruel in order to be kind. 'As fire drives out fire, so pity, pity.' For the benefit of the individual offender, as well as the world at large, his love must cloak itself in wrath, and if necessary in punishment. He must 'speak daggers' to induce repentance, and if words should fail they must be followed by deeds. Here, like Dante, he became a Ghibelline; he discovered the moral necessity of the State and of an iron law that could be brought to bear upon offenders, and the justification of the warlike virtues, valour, honour, etc., as servants of the State and of Justice. And his own evident duty, as leading professionally the spiritual life, was to come to the aid of the

State and of Justice, the protectors of the innocent, with all the valour of his pen. His muse must change; he must begin now to satirise and condemn human wickedness in all its forms. This was a new grief to him, because, as once before he had sacrificed morality to beauty, so now he must sacrifice beauty to morality. The new sacrifice is symbolised in the death of the Phœnix, in the poem *Phœnix and Turtle*, written about this time. And certainly, so far as such first attempts in the new method as *Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens* are concerned, there was a sacrifice of beauty. But as the poet pursued his mission of Spiritual Justice, his genius discovered all the secrets of the tragic art, and for the old sweet beauty of his romance and comedy, a new beauty of terror and sublimity, as in *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and the rest of his

later tragedies. His divine wrath satisfied by these works, he began already his return to the old sweet beauty in *The Tempest* and its two companion plays, *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*, which treat symbolically of divine wrath and its issues. And from those fragments of his last play, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which have been left us by the vulgar editorial hand of Fletcher, it is evident that had Shakspeare lived, he would in the rest of his plays have renewed his mighty youth and have excelled himself in his dearest form of beauty. Those fragments are all that remain to us of the final freedom of Ariel; and as we read them we seem to behold a sunset from a bower of roses; 'Roses,' to quote the opening words of the play:—

'Roses, their sharp spines being gone'
(*i.e.*, *Beauty*, *no longer wrathful*)
'Not royal in their smells alone,'

(*i.e.*, *Not white roses of Truth merely*)
'But in their hue.'
(*i.e.*, *Red roses of Beauty.*)

Now, as Shakspeare found 'sermons in stones,' much more did he in this most momentous incident of his life, the change in his spirit from love to justice. As upon fancy, or amorous illusion, in his early plays, so upon this moral evolution he speculated almost endlessly. It required three symbolical five-act plays to deliver him of his burden of thought on the subject. And in each of these plays the subject is at once considered in relation to individual experience and to world-history. For a symbol is the image of an abstract idea of a class, and therefore represents, on the one hand, the idea, on the other, all and every the particulars of the class. Thus in *The Tempest* Stephano represents both sensuality and the whole class of sensualists. Antonio represents

both ambition and the whole class of ambitious men. Thus by a score or so of symbolic characters may be told a story, symbolic at once of the conflict of ideas, passions, principles in the individual mind, and the conflict of classes moved by those ideas, passions, principles, in the world. Except for the briefest references to the two companion plays, I must here confine myself to *The Tempest* and its meaning as a world - history. Shakspeare thought that a general evolution of the human spirit from love to justice took place at the Reformation, similar to that of his own spirit. Thomas à Kempis, in his cell, writing the 'Imitatio,' changed in a few years to John Knox, thundering in the market-place against wickedness in high places. The tempest at the beginning of the play is the tempest of the Reformation. There is a story of events before the opening, when

Prospero, as the Spirit, had not yet evolved to Justice. In time these events are said to occupy fifteen years, but the years stand for centuries. The three years spent by Prospero as a prince of power in Italy, with his infant daughter Miranda, represent the first three centuries of our era, when the Spirit lived with its Ideal in the world in Primitive Christianity. About A.D. 300 (upon the conversion of Constantine) the Primitive Church became worldly, and the Spirit and its Ideal were driven from the world. Prospero and Miranda were cast adrift upon the raging sea of life and time.

Thereafter, Alonzo (the ruling class of the world, and so the world), accompanied by Antonio (Ambition) and Sebastian (*Laissez-faire*), embarks on life's sea, upon a voyage of twelve hundred years, that ends in the marriage of his daughter Claribel (Fairseeming or

Expediency) to a monarch of darkest Africa (Barbarous Cruelty and Crime). This dire end was fully achieved in the days of Machiavelli, Alexander VI., and Cæsar Borgia. In the meantime, Prospero and Miranda (the Spirit and the Ideal), after a long and dangerous voyage across the centuries, had arrived at their kingdom, like an island, a world by itself amid the sea of human life. This was with the rise of the new learning, the discovery of printing, and the beginnings of the Reformation. Ariel (Thought) is set free. Sycorax (Superstition and Error), that had imprisoned Thought, dies. Caliban, the son of Sycorax and the Devil (a rude and graceless humanity, 'littered' of Superstition), is taken in hand by Prospero (the Spirit), and subjected to education and control. Miranda at last buds into womanhood, or the Ideal grows to realisation. As a result, the

marriage of Expediency to Crime by the rulers of the world can no longer be borne. Prospero, through Ariel, or the Spirit, becomes a Spirit of Justice, and operating through Thought, 'uproars the universal sea' of humanity against the criminals. The world suffers political and moral shipwreck, and is cast upon the shores of the Kingdom of the Spirit, or the Kingdom of Heaven, where it may consider its ways and be wise. Humanity is thrown into a Hamlet state. It is preserved in the body, the ship is safe in harbour, but the master, the boatswain and the mariners, that is the Reason, the Will and the Corporal Agents are lulled asleep and are unable to act, by the art of Prospero, or the operation of the Spirit.

Alonzo, the ruling class, is in despair, but still clings to Antonio and Sebastian, Ambition and *Laissez-faire*, its old

vices. On the other hand, Ferdinand, Alonzo's son, bears burdens for the love of Miranda; that is, the youth of the world, the Idealists, obedient to the Spirit, undergo all toil and tribulation for the love of the Ideal. Authority being thus divided between the Backward and Progressive parties, the Mob, Caliban, lifts up its head, and led on by Stephano and Trinculo, Sensuality and Folly, riots freely, threatening the destruction of Prospero, all Justice, Law and Civilisation from the earth. The nominal three hours of the play represent an indefinite period of time. These events, the world's punishment for its abandonment of the Primitive Spirit and Ideal of Love, had but begun in the sixteenth century, have been going on ever since, and the end is not yet. So that *The Tempest* is in part a prophecy; it is, to quote a phrase from another play (*Troilus and Cres-*

sida), 'a baby figure of the giant mass of things to come at large.' We are duly shown how Ferdinand will yet win his Miranda, or how Prince Posterity will yet win or realise the Ideal; how Alonzo, the ruling class, will be converted from errors by the terrible force of events, and by appeals to the conscience; how the Mob, Caliban, will fall into the slough of its own bestial excess, and by the agents of the law be brought back to due subjection and control. Then all will be forgiveness, the World be reconciled with the Spirit (Alonzo with Prospero), and Ferdinand, Prince Posterity, will take Miranda, the Ideal, to be his wife and queen.

By the operation of Justice there will be brought about a millennium of universal love and happiness.

Like the Spirit in *The Sonnets*, so the Spirit of Justice is, by the poet, identified, on the one hand, with God, on the

other, with himself. The identification of Prospero with God is easy to perceive. Prospero says, in Act V., '*I* raised the tempest.' In Act III., it is said that *Destiny* caused the human sea to 'belch up' Alonzo and his companions, surfeited with them at last. Again Ariel calls Prospero 'My potent *Master*,' and Prospero says, '*My* spirits obey.' On the other hand Ariel says, 'I and my fellows are ministers of *Fate*.' As Prospero represents the Spirit of Justice, so, it is clear, from a comparison of these phrases, that he represents, at the same time, Fate or Destiny. Elsewhere in the play, for Fate or Destiny are substituted the terms, Nature, the Powers, Immortal Providence. In a word, then, it is God that Prospero represents together with the Spirit. It could not be otherwise, for God or the Moral Law, in acting on the minds of men, acts through their per-

ception of Truth—that is, through the Spirit.

The poet's further identification of Prospero with himself has been very generally divined by critics. If the play be interpreted, as it can be, as the history of an individual mind instead of as a history of the world, then it proves to be a symbolical reproduction of the history of Shakspeare's own mind, as that history may be independently gathered from the long series of his preceding works, Prospero then figuring as the Spirit and true self within him, ordering the conflict of his ideas, passions and principles to a happy issue, and thus the whole play becomes evidence on this point. Shakspeare's identification with the Spirit in the history of the world consists in this—he was a great part of the Spirit; he worked with the Spirit, as the Spirit with God, to the same end.

His work for Justice and the Moral Law was in his appeals to the conscience in his series of great tragedies, in which he showed vice its image and Nemesis, in which he judged the world from the stage, to purge it and aid its repentance and amendment of life. Therefore it is Prospero communes with Ariel, or Shakspeare with his thought, thus :—

> 'How now, moody? . . .
> Thou thinkst it much to tread the ooze of the salt deep,'

(The sea throughout the play is human life, and to tread the ooze of the sea is to treat of human vice, a task to which Shakspeare's thought is reluctant.)

> 'To run upon the sharp wind of the north,'

(To utter words of wrath and denunciation. So Emilia, when she is about to

denounce Iago, says, 'I will be as liberal as the north;' and Cymbeline's anger is compared to 'the tyrannous breathing of the north.')

> 'To do me business in the veins of the earth
> When it is baked with frost.'

(Thaw the frozen heart of humanity.) Ariel, Shakspeare's thought, longs for freedom from this task, to soar to the heaven of pure Beauty.

It was a task of this kind that Ariel was instructed by Prospero to perform when a banquet is placed by 'strange shapes' before Alonzo and his companions; as they would taste, Ariel, as a harpy, claps his wings upon the table, and reproaches 'the three men of sin' with their crimes. They rush forth conscience-stricken. Prospero is present, invisible. He is Shakspeare, behind the scenes, presenting a play—*Macbeth* with its banquet scene, perchance — before

the criminal statesmen and courtiers of his age; the 'strange shapes' are the actors; while Ariel, the harpy, is thought as Conscience, seriously marring the general enjoyment of the play. The scene also recalls the play-scene in *Hamlet*, where, also, the king rises and flies, appalled by the voice of Conscience, to his oratory.

In Prospero's farewell address to his 'potent art' or 'rough magic' we may read Shakspeare's farewell address to the tragic art. He says:—

> 'To the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt.'

The allusion is to Coriolanus, compared in the play of that name to an 'oak not to be wind shaken,' and represented destroyed by his own pride. And the suggestion is confirmed by the following parallel passage from that play:—

'To imitate the graces of the gods,
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt
That should but rive an oak.'

The parallelism helps to show that the play of *Coriolanus* was in Shakspeare's mind as he wrote.

Again he says :—

'The strong-based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar.'

It will be remembered that in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Antony, once a strong-based monarch of half the world, compares himself to a cloudy

'Promontory
With trees upon it, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air.'

And now, he adds, he 'cannot hold this visible shape.' The allusion then is to Antony, represented, by the poet, de-

stroyed by his own profligacy. There also seems in the words to be an allusion to Macbeth, who was said by the witches to be 'ripe for shaking.' And in the play of that name the poet did 'impress the forest, bid the tree unfix his earth-bound root,' Birnam Wood to come to Dunsinane. And as the tragic Nemesis mirrors the natural Nemesis, this strain of metaphor is applicable as spoken by Prospero in either capacity.

There is then in Prospero a Trinity in Unity of God, the Spirit of Justice, and Shakspeare judging the world. But Prospero, like the Logos of Philo and the Logos of *The Sonnets*, represents more than a Trinity. He represents, for instance, the whole class of servants of God, working for God, contemporary with Shakspeare or successive to him even beyond these days; for the work is not yet accomplished. Prospero represents also Shakspeare's predecessors,

'through the dark backward and abysm of time,' through fifteen hundred years or more, to the appearance of Christ and the birth of Miranda, the Ideal of Love. He is a symbol that unites all these servants of God in one. Christ also made Himself such a symbol when He prayed concerning His disciples, 'As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, may they also be one in us; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.' If then His disciples are to be esteemed one with Christ on one shore of the abysm of time, and one with Prospero upon the further shore, it follows inevitably that Christ also must be esteemed one with Prospero.

Now Christ Himself was a symbol of a Trinity in Unity, Himself, the Spirit of Love, and God or the Moral Law of Love. In his life, therefore, He exemplified to the uttermost an unqualified

Love. He said, nevertheless, that one day He would come in a different form to judge the world. This meant that He foresaw the Moral Law of Love would not be obeyed, and would exact a terrible vengeance; and that then the Spirit of Love would, for Love's sake, have to change to a Spirit of Justice, to convince the world of sin and produce repentance; and that the disciple, one with Him, in whom He then most fully appeared, would be a spiritual judge condemning the world's iniquity.

For Shakspeare, as we have seen, an offended God or Moral Law of Love, exacted vengeance in the political disasters of the Reformation; the Spirit of Love changed to a Spirit of Justice when the monks came out of their cells to be reformers thundering in the market-place against wickedness in high places; and in himself the highest Love had

changed to the sternest Justice, that for twelve years had been condemning the world in a series of tragedies, which he knew well sealed him as the supreme man of his time. These three conjoint phenomena were to him Christ coming to judge the world at the Reformation and during an indefinite period of subsequent time. Therefore he makes Prospero, the new Christ, fulfil the Christian prophecies of the Second Coming. Prospero says :—

> 'I have bedimmed
> The noon-tide sun.'

He beclouds the sun of Love with the wrath of Justice. He says also :—

> 'Graves at my command
> Have waked their sleepers.'

By the terrible logic of events and by

appeals to the conscience, he brings about the resurrection of the dead in trespasses and sins from their sunken and lost condition.

He casts Caliban, described as Beast and Devil, and who is Rude Will in Man and the Mob, into the destined lake of his own bestial excess.

He opens his book, or record, or memory of men's offences, the recording angel's book, and on the repentance of mankind, yet to come, of course, he drowns it beneath the then Halcyon sea of human life.

He makes Heaven, typified by Juno, meet Earth, typified by Ceres; and Iris appears, or the bow of Peace is spread.

The dissolution of the world, although he brings it about in a social sense, he postpones, in a literal sense, to beyond the millennium. Then

'Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit *shall* dissolve;
And like this unsubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind.'

The Tempest, like *The Sonnets*, is a work of a religious nature by unmistakable marks. It is imbued throughout with high moral passion, it presents in Prospero a worker and teacher of the moral law, a God-man, a Logos, a Trinity in Unity, which, moreover, is the Christian Trinity in Unity. And observe, Prospero is not the mere artistic presentation of a God-man. He is the proclamation of the eternal significance of a *rôle* that has been lived. For twelve years previous to the proclamation, Shakspeare, at one with the Spirit and with God, at one with Christ the Judge, in a series of great tragedies had judged the world.

The first half of Shakspeare's career ended in the climax, Shakspeare as Pan ; the second half ends in the climax, Shakspeare as Christ come to judge the world.

IV

With the First Coming of Christ, according to the legend, a mysterious voice was heard by certain mariners, proclaiming from the shores of Asia Minor, 'Great Pan is dead!' The legend involves the truth that, in the wisdom of Providence, the then universality of the Spirit in the Græco-Roman world was about to be narrowed as premature. The world's morality was not ripe for so much art and so much knowledge; and the world, in consequence, was becoming corrupt. The Ideal as a whole was to be forgotten, and the world's attention, by a new religion, to be contracted to the moral ideal alone for a period of time. But at the Second

Coming of Christ, at the return of the faith to its primitive simplicity with the Reformation, simultaneously great Pan was born again with the Renaissance. And now Christ and Pan, the Moral Spirit and the Universal Spirit, no longer to be divided, appear reconciled in one, in one type—Shakspeare. For now the moral ideal has become fixed in the mind of humanity, that thereby has become fit also for the Ideal as a whole. *The Winter's Tale* has been told. Hermione, the Ideal of the Græco-Roman World, after an interval of fifteen hundred years, has stepped down from her pedestal, a statue come to life, and clasped in her arms Perdita, the Christian ideal—in its perfection, indeed, lost as soon as born, but wafted over the sea of life and time to reappear adolescent in Bohemia. The Renaissance has clasped the Reformation in an embrace which is the Art and this

new religion of Shakspeare, of Beauty, Truth, Love and Justice.

In Ibsen's 'Emperor and Galilean,' Julian proposes to become a second or counter Messiah of the World, against Christ the Messiah of the Moral Spirit. But a certain mystic, named Maximus, dreams of a third Messiah, who shall reconcile the World and the Spirit of Christianity, shall be God-Cæsar and Pan-Logos. This third Messiah is precisely Shakspeare.

The reconciliation of the World and the Spirit does not imply any reconciliation of the Spirit with the evil in the world. It implies that there is much good in the world, which is not included in the Spirit of Christianity; and this good Christianity should cease to regard with suspicion and hostility, and in the interests of humanity should become reconciled with it. The reconciliation wanted is three-fold, of Hel-

lenism and Hebraism, of religion and science, and of the ideal and practical in morality. Now in Shakspeare's Ideal of Beauty, Truth and Morality in one, is involved the reconciliation of Hellenism (Beauty and Truth) with Hebraism (Morality). Art and science become as incumbent on the conscience, as much religious duties as morality. And as Christ, at his First Coming a carpenter, at his Second Coming was a play-actor, the theatre of Shakspeare becomes as sacred as the Church of Christ and one with it. Again the threefold Ideal in one involves a reconciliation of religion and science. For it implies that when we have arrived at truth, moral or other, our duty does not stop there; we have still to express that truth in terms of beauty. In doing so, we shall not deny the truth hid within the beauty, yet it may happen that from science we have

passed into religion. For what is any great religion but a beautiful expression of the Truth, known, however partially, in the age in which the religion was founded? Shakspeare's new religion involves also a reconciliation of the Ideal and Practical in Morality. For while it affirms, like Primitive Christianity, Love as the Ideal, it also affirms that in an imperfect world Love inspires Justice, and can only be realised through Justice, the practical morality. Under these circumstances the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of this World, Church and State, should be fused, their two moralities being both religiously incumbent upon the conscience, now one, now the other, as the facts of our present life may require. God is not in the Head of the Church alone, but in Cæsar also; therefore, as in England and Russia, the Head of the Church should be

Cæsar. As Shakspeare puts it at the end of his play, *Cymbeline*, which is a symbolic history of the Spirit :—

> 'The Roman Eagle
> From South to West, on wings soaring aloft,
> Lessened herself, and in the beams of the sun
> So vanished ; which foreshowed our princely Eagle,
> The Imperial Cæsar, should again unite
> His favour with the radiant Cymbeline,
> That shines here in the West.'

Shakspeare's new religion, as it reconciles the World and the Spirit of Christianity, so comes not in antagonism to Christianity but as a development of it necessitated by time. It thus presents a golden bridge over which the Christian may pass—I see already the Broad Churchman leading the van —without abandoning his precious burden of memories, from the religion of sorrow to a religion of life, light and joy, such as now we look for. It fulfils the promise of Christianity, and

presents Christ as come in glory in the person of the most glorious of poets, in whom Divine Love figures as purple-clad in the power of Cæsar and crowned with the radiant Beauty and Truth of Pan.

By the Will of Immortal Providence, it is in these islands that this, the most resplendent figure of all time, has made his destined appearance, a modern Messiah born of the Anglo-Keltic people, that since have multiplied and spread so wonderfully over the globe. May he, by his Religion, aid everywhere the cause of Justice, and lead on our civilisation at last, through all the continents and the isles of the sea, in Beauty, Truth and Love, to blossom like the Rose!

Notes on the Symbolism of *The Winter's Tale*

What an elective affinity there is between the Northern genius and that of Italy! This is in some measure shadowed in *The Winter's Tale.* There Perdita the Ideal, arising with the Reformation in the North, is united with Hermione, the Ideal of the antique world, reviving with the Renaissance in Italy.

. . . . .

For the characters in that play are types and, as such, are not confined to the limits of individual existence. The fifteen *years'* interval between the third and fourth acts represents an interval of fifteen *centuries*, as suggested by the first words of the clown after the interval:—'Fifteen hundred sheep

shorn, what comes the wool to?' This explains why the first three acts take place in the time of the Delphic oracle, while in the last two acts we find ourselves in the age of Julio Romano, the age of the Renaissance.

. . . . .

It has been supposed by the literalists that the mention of Julio Romano as living within fifteen years of the operation of the Delphic oracle was a slip on the part of the poet. Contrariwise, this should open critical eyes to the fact that the fifteen years' interval in the middle of the play represents fifteen centuries. Likewise literalists have supposed that the poet was guilty of a gross geographical error when representing the sea beating on the shores of Bohemia, an entirely inland country.

. . . . .

But this sea is only a sea of time and trouble, that divides the Christian

Ideal in the antique world from its growth to maturity, with the Reformation, in Bohemia. The same metaphor occurs in the 56th Sonnet, where Shakspeare is regretting that his thought of the Ideal is separated by the necessity of business-toil from its future realisation by art.

'Let this sad interim like the ocean be,
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new,
Come daily to the banks, that when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view;
Or call it winter, which being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wished,
more rare.'

. . . . .

For some of these ideas I am indebted to Felix Boaz, who, in the eighties, published, at Stettin in Germany, a *brochure* entitled 'Das Sturm und der Winter-märchen' (*The Tempest* and the *Winter's Tale*). This came to me in the nineties as a coping stone to all my own work;

and I am greatly indebted to the author for the completion he has given to my whole system of Shakspeare's thought. All previous remarks of mine on the *Winter's Tale* require supplementing from this felicitous *brochure.*

. . . . .

Felix Boaz, however, ignores completely Shakspeare's moral genius. He sees that the revivification of Hermione is the resurrection of the antique Ideal at the Renaissance; but in her maternal embrace of Perdita, he sees only the union of the antique and the modern genius in such works as Goethe's 'Iphigenia' and 'Hermann and Dorothea.' And he has no explanation to offer of the incidents of the play between Perdita's birth and her growth to maturity in Bohemia.

. . . . .

These incidents are best understood in connection with Shakspeare's own

life. In 1597, his spirit was completely wedded to his Ideal of Beauty, Truth and Love in one (*cf.* Sonnet 105). But Love, pure and only, he found an insufficient guide of life in an imperfect world. With such a principle of conduct it seemed impossible to live in the world at all. He retired in doubt to Stratford and seclusion. But Conscience reiterated to him that his Ideal was true, and if true, then must be practised in the world, for in seclusion it would be but a lifeless idea and phantom of the mind. And Reason finally convinced him that Love could be lived in the world under the shield of Justice, that is, of the temporal power, the State, law, judgment. Then he came forth from his temporary seclusion, reconciled with the world, rejecting the impossible command, 'Resist not evil,' and accepting the responsibility of punishing it through law.

Now, by the light of this evolution in his own mind, Shakspeare interpreted history. He supposed that in the early centuries of our era his own Ideal of Beauty, Truth and Love in one existed in the world. He represents it by Hermione (a godsend). But the Love, the Christian Ideal, thus added to the Hellenic Ideal of Beauty and Truth, had not yet learned the conditions of its practice. Then Leontes, the Idealist, thought himself betrayed by his Ideal to the world (Polyxenes), drove the world from him, and retired into seclusion, the great monkish seclusion of the Middle Ages. But so, for the monks, the Ideal died for the time, and became but a phantom idea in the temple of the mind.

. . . . .

Yet it had been born again (in Perdita) and presented anew as a living reality by Paulina, Conscience, and though

rejected by Leontes, who represents the monks, was received gladly by the simple of the world, and under the protection of the world (Polyxenes) and its law, grew to maturity in the Middle Ages, until in Reformation times it was fully revealed to the world, first in Bohemia. The reunion of Perdita and Hermione is the embrace of the Reformation and the Renaissance in the art and civilization of the modern world.

. . . . .

It is not needed now to defend, but only to reproduce Shakspeare's ideas. They are sound enough, if a sufficiently broad view be taken of European evolution; though objections may be raised in plenty, from the details of history, to the full justice of his sweeping synthesis. In the *Winter's Tale*, Paulina, the shrew wife of Antigonus, Doubt, but, in second nuptials, the wife of Camillo, Reason, represents Conscience.

Notes on the Symbolism of *Cymbeline*

In a note to Grosart's edition of the Elizabethan book 'Love's Martyr,' by Robert Chester, we are informed that Mr Simpson, one of the most spiritual of Shakspeare's critics, intended to reveal a connection between that work and the play of *Cymbeline*, but was prevented by death. A fact that at once strikes attention is, that a Roman general Lucius appears in both works. But the relation lies deeper than could be implied by a fact of this order.

. . . . .

Robert Chester's quaint poem tells how Dame Nature brought a Phœnix, referred to as a bird, but described as a

beautiful woman, to an island, there to find a woe-worn turtle-dove as mate. Chester seems to have been 'sealed of the tribe of Ben'; for the poets of the Mermaid were evidently informed of the ideas of the book previous to its publication. With these they were in such sympathy that poems by Chapman, Marston, Jonson and Shakspeare respectively, upon Chester's theme, were appended, and aided, no doubt, to attract attention to their friend's poem. Shakspeare's verses were those now found in his works under the title *The Phœnix and Turtle.*

. . . . .

From a comparison of all these poems it becomes clear that for all the poets the Phœnix represents the Ideal, an infinite Perfection at once containing and inspiring all virtue, knowledge and art, and the woe-worn Turtle is the Idealist or lover of the Ideal.

Now in the play of *Cymbeline* Iachimo says of Imogen :—

> 'All of her that is out of door, most rich!
> If she be furnished with a mind so rare,
> She is alone the Arabian bird.'

And when Imogen is found apparently dead in the cave, Arviragus says, 'The bird is dead.' Imogen (born out of lowest depths) is one of the poet's human types of the Ideal, and in thinking of her he could not help thinking of Chester's Phœnix. This shows a deep-rooted sympathy between the two poets. Posthumus, it is evident, represents the woe-worn Idealist or Turtle.

. . . . .

It may be doubted, however, if the sympathy extends more into detail in *Cymbeline* than in other plays where also it is manifested. The Phœnix and Turtle, the Ideal and woe-worn Idealist,

are represented equally in Viola and Orsino of *Twelfth Night*, in Miranda and Ferdinand of *The Tempest*, in Hermione (a godsend) and Leontes, and in Perdita and Florizel of *The Winter's Tale*. In *The Tempest* there is again talk of the Phœnix :—

> 'Now I will believe . . .
> . . . That in Arabia
> There is one tree, the Phœnix throne, one Phœnix
> At this hour reigning there.'

The Tempest, by the way, is founded, to a large extent, upon Ben Jonson's poem at the end of Chester's 'Love's Martyr.'

. . . . .

In *The Lover's Complaint* it is said of the youth :—

> 'His phœnix-down begins but to appear.'

This youth is one with the beautiful youth of *The Sonnets*, in this case a

male type of the Ideal. So here we have Mr W. H. brought into relation also with Chester's Phœnix, while Shakspeare himself is the woe-worn Turtle. This calls attention to a new thread of similarity in the plays. For we learn from *The Sonnets* that there was an evolution to assured unity of friendship, and, at the same time, to assured unity of the poet's spirit with the Ideal, an evolution which took three years. These three years were marked by a period of woe for the poet, due to the fact that both his friend and the Ideal became, for a time, non-moral. It is so, and therefore seductive and evil, that the Ideal appears in the youth of *The Lover's Complaint.* But our special point now is as to the period of three years.

. . . . . .

It will be found that, in the plays, the type of the woe-worn Idealist serves a

three-period for his Ideal, and, no doubt, this is a reflection of the poet's experience as recorded in *The Sonnets.* The woe-worn Turtle, Shakspeare, there serves three years to become united in spirit with the Phœnix, Mr W. H. and the Ideal. So Orsino was three months before he was united to Viola, Ferdinand took three hours to woo and win Miranda, Leontes took 'three crabbed months' to win Hermione, Florizel took three days to win Perdita. Time is not mentioned for the winning of Imogen by Posthumus.

. . . . .

All this shows to what a degree Idealism was a conscious faith with Shakspeare. It was also a faith upon which he reasoned, which he studied in its application to temporal affairs. He came to the painful conclusion that it was a faith that in practice must be mixed with worldly alloy. As to Art,

as to Truth, as to Virtue, the present condition of the world requires that the Sun of the Ideal should veil its rays in clouds. Hence, when the Idealist has attained to the full vision of the Ideal, when the Turtle has won the Phœnix, there is immediate consummation in one sacrificial fire.

> 'Beauty, Truth and Rarity
> Grace in all simplicity
> Here inclosed in cinders lie.'
>
> 'Phœnix and the turtle fled
> In a mutual flame from hence.'

. . . . .

In virtue, the mora Ideal, Love, must be mixed with an active spirit of Justice, which involves injury, pain to fellow mortals for one's own preservation and the benefit of the world. It is necessary to be cruel, upon occasion, in order to be kind. To the resolute adoption of this policy the only alterna-

tive is monastic seclusion; but that is still more opposed to the Ideal, for a cloistered virtue is no virtue. To be cruel in order to be kind was Hamlet's difficulty; and how great a part it played in Shakspeare's life may be inferred from the fact of his dedicating his greatest tragedy to it as a subject. In *Hamlet* the difficulty is only presented, not solved. But Shakspeare solved it for himself by a resolute adoption of an active spirit of justice in his private life, contemporaneously with a change of his Muse from comedy to tragedy, or exhibitions of Nemesis and Justice. And at the close of his life, in *Cymbeline*, he presents the problem again as solved.

. . . . .

Among the absurdities of *Cymbeline*, when it is regarded as a play that needs no interpretation, is this, that Cymbeline, having waged war against Cæsar rather

than pay him tribute, and having defeated the Roman army sent against him, and taken its general, Caius Lucius, and Iachimo, prisoners, suddenly announces that he will now pay the tribute.

> 'Although the victor, we submit to Cæsar
> And to the Roman Empire; promising
> To pay our wonted tribute, from the which
> We were dissuaded by our wicked queen.'

. . . . . .

The fact is, the poet has only been dealing apparently with a political question of tribute from one country to another at a certain time; he has been considering the larger question involved in the text, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' of giving the world its due at all times. The man who secludes himself with his Ideal does not give the world its due; but he who fights and conquers the world for

his Ideal does give the world its due. From this point of view it will be seen that Cymbeline's sudden determination to pay the tribute is but a recognition of the propriety of the conduct to which he has been forced, and an announcement of his intention to continue fighting and conquering the world. Thus the apparent absurdity, in its place, of the passage quoted above disappears.

. . . . .

Moreover, when the secluded idealist is forced into fighting the world, when from saying, 'Little children, love one another,' he begins to declaim, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees!' he learns to distinguish in the world two classes—the one represented in this play by the Holy Lucius, the other by Iachimo — the ministers of temporal justice and the vicious. He had previously objected to the cruelties of

temporal justice, of the State, as the secluded Tolstoi does now, but his own burning indignation against the wickedness of the world brings him into sympathy with those who pass beyond words to control this wickedness with blows. He recognises the State, that the temporal power is indeed a part of the spiritual power and deserves all its support.

> 'The Imperial Cæsar should again unite
> His favour with the radiant Cymbeline.'

. . . . .

The play follows the lines of Shakspeare's own life. From the end of 1597 it became his prevailing preoccupation to reconcile the ideal with the practical, the inspirations of the spirit with the politic necessities of the world. When, in 1597, he realised how far the world was not yet the kingdom of

Heaven, his first inclination was to retire from it to a life alone with the Ideal, after the fashion set by the early monks. But from this other-worldliness he was aroused by the need to provide for himself, wife and children, as well as by the perception that in seclusion the Ideal must remain a mere phantom of the mind, and that it could only acquire reality in the storm and stress of life.

. . . .

At first he turned on the world, as in *Timon of Athens*, with the splenetic fury which we find also in Christ's attack on the Scribes and Pharisees, but this gave way to a conscientious resolute adoption of justice as the moral principle governing his satire and his tragic art. And as thus he fought against the world, he began to feel that the cause of justice was the cause of the Ideal, that the more men strove

for justice the more the Ideal became manifest in the world, the more it passed over from being a phantom in the mind of the lonely idealist to becoming a reality in the world under the sway of the allied eternal Spirit and temporal power, God and Cæsar.

. . . . .

Thus Shakspeare grew to be reconciled with the world. In *Cymbeline* this spiritual process is represented by the movement of symbolic figures. Imogen represents the Ideal; the Queen - Stepmother, other - worldliness; Cloten, the splenetic fury; Belarius, Guiderius and Arviragus represent the worldly virtues, so apt to be lost by the idealist in seclusion: justice, valour, honour. These kill off the splenetic fury, and take its place in Cymbeline for ever afterwards, as 'companions of our person.'

. . . . .

Pisanio is Conscience, and persistently sides with just and valorous word and deed, however much these may seem to traverse the gentle inspiration of the Ideal, Love. The Doctor, Cornelius, represents Reason, and presides at the death-bed of the Queen-Stepmother, other-worldliness. Imogen, the Ideal, may be observed passing over to the general of Rome, that is to say, coming forth into the world as Cymbeline wages his spiritual war. Posthumus represents the Right, and alternates in alliance between Cymbeline and the world until their reconciliation.

. . . . .

The sleep of Imogen, which is mistaken for death, is, like the sleep of Miranda when Prospero assumes the insignia of prophetic power, or like the long silence of Hermione, but an expression of the old saw, '*Silent leges*

inter arma.' The ideal of universal love and peace ceases to exist in the world while men fight for it, though it recovers and reappears with the victory.

The Method of the Symbolism of *The Sonnets* Displayed

The shortest way, perhaps, to impress the reader with the possibility that the style of *The Sonnets* veils a symbolic meaning, will be for myself to compose, at a respectful distance, after this style so that he may follow the process. First I must give in prose the thoughts that I am afterwards to turn into symbolic verse. For this purpose let it be supposed that an art-critic having roamed the Academy from first room to last, and, after the manner of his species, found all barren, upon returning to his club, liberates his soul to his intimates as follows :—

1. 2. Where is there any Beauty? Nowhere do I find that supreme harmony which I call Beauty.
3. 4. Our artists have not the true insight of old, direct from Beauty itself.
5. Instead of being inspired by love of Beauty, they pander to sickly cant.
6. 7. There is no Ideal left to Art, and therefore no inspiration.
8. 9. True Art is flying this country; it cannot afford an Ideal in these times.
10. Beauty needs an educated taste,
11. Or it cannot find fit interpretation;
12. And we are barbarians all.
13. Art can no longer render Beauty its dues.
14. I am a voice crying in the wilderness.

This Jeremiad I will now turn into

verse, feebly imitative of the symbolic style of *The Sonnets*, and sometimes borrowing from them, but neglecting rhyme and any special preciosity of rhythm.

To a Beautiful Youth, Representative of Beauty, absent from England

1. Ah, whither hast thou fled? I miss thy hue,
2. All hues in thine controlling.[1]
3. Unlustrous, base,
   All eyes do seem, thy brighter eye away,
4. To which they looked and borrowed of its light:
5. All hearts are faint with famine of thy Love.
6. Thou that erstwhile the Argument of Art,[2]

[1] *Cf.* S. 20. [2] *Cf.* S. 38.

7. Didst give it skill, dost leave it skilless now;
8. And travell'st beyond sea, scorning to tempt
9. Our love's lean penury[1] with thy rich cost;
10. And being as fair in knowledge as in hue,[2]
11. Finding thy worth a limit past our praise,[3]
12. From barbarous coast to barbarous coast dost pass
13. But makst no merchandise.
14. I hear thy voice,
'Tis crying now in the lone wilderness.

If the art-critic's prose-lamentations are compared with the verse into which they are rendered, in parts as indicated by the numbers affixed, it will be found

[1] *Cf.* S. 84. [2] *Cf.* S. 82. [3] *Cf.* S. 82.

that under a difference of phraseology, prose and verse correspond in sense. It should specially be noted how such various terms as Beauty, Ideal, Inspiration, Art, Artists, 'I' or Criticism all fall naturally under the one symbol of the person apparently addressed. The process may now be reversed, and one of Shakspeare's sonnets turned into prose, line by line. But as the authority for the prose version will be less in this case, it will be best to choose for our example a sonnet in which the thought is simple, and Beauty is addressed more in unity than variety of form.

SONNET 39

1. OH, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
2. When thou art all the better part of me?

3. What can mine own praise to mine
   own self bring?
4. And what is't but mine own when I
   praise thee?
5. Even for this let us divided live,
6. And our dear Love lose name of
   single one,
7. That by this separation I may
   give
8. That due to thee which thou de-
   serv'st alone.
9. O absence, what a torment wouldst
   thou prove,
10. Were it not thy sour leisure gave
    sweet leave
11. To entertain the time with thoughts
    of love,
12. Which time and thoughts so sweetly
    doth deceive—

13. And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
14. By praising him here, who doth hence remain.

Translation

1. How in modesty can I sing the worth of Beauty,
2. When it is all my better part, my thought, my genius, my soul?
3. What value hath self-praise?
4. And self-praise it is when I praise Beauty, my better part.
5. For this reason there must be distinction,
6. Our union must be division in name,
7. That thus I may give

8. The dues to Beauty that it deserves alone.
9. All division from my life's delight were torment,
10. But that it permits me
11. Thoughts of love,
12. In which Beauty is all the time, though thought distinct;
13. And that it teaches to make twain the one Beauty,
14. That praised here as hence, hence remains in the praise.

Sonnets 1-126 may thus be translated throughout from pretty, caressing addresses to a cherished human friend, into the poet's communings with his ideas of Beauty, Truth, Virtue, Art and his own genius. The Dark Lady series may be similarly translated into the

poet's communings with his ideas of Love. Compared with the plays, *The Sonnets* are as M. Renan's work, *L'Avenir de la Science*, containing that author's theory of the scientific life, compared with the definite scientific works in which he realised his aspirations. The obvious remark will be made that the original sonnets of Shakspeare are preferable to the translation. Likewise the original French of M. Renan is preferable to a translation. But French must be learnt, and best by the practice of translation, before it can be understood in the original. And the symbolic style of *The Sonnets* must be learnt before it can be understood in the original. Once learnt, there is no more translation necessary then. The whole meaning of *The Sonnets* will be read in the original with facility. The 'primrose by the river's brim,' in this

case, will have become not merely a 'yellow primrose' dimly suggestive of 'something more'; in a 'language of flowers,' now understood, it will definitely express its sense of Beauty. In talk about Beauty, in Æsthetics, there is usually no more beauty than the oft-recurring word. To talk about Beauty in a perfect form of Beauty, that is the problem solved by *The Sonnets;* and it could only be achieved by the aid of symbolism.

THE ARROW

A SYMBOLIC POEM

I WILL not tell what locks are thine,
Or dark or fair of hue ;
Nor in thine eyes what tints do shine
Of hazel or of blue ;

Nor of thy lips how ripe and red,
Nor what thy bloom may be ;
I care not! oh, for ever fled
That time these might move me!

I'll tell what fits my purpose best!
Upon thy gentle tide
Of life, thou seemst with snowy breast
A graceful swan to glide ;

When, as I, on thy margent seen,
In sunrise rapt, draw nigh,
Thou risest bridling in thy sheen
Of rustling majesty.

And all thy soul, I'll tell, is brave,
Noble, bright, pure and sweet,
And prisoner, free, and sovereign, slave,
And strong and bold and fleet.

In thee it like an eagle lies
And broods above the stream,
Unknowing that it should arise
Into the sun's noon-beam.

In vain proud ensigns to display,
And plume thee 'gainst the dawn;
Chaste wrath might ne'er win back sweet sway!—
Thou seest the arrow drawn;

And watchest with a vague unrest
  My steady aim for thee,—
For aye to pierce a swan's white breast
  And set an eagle free.

THE END

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